

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /009 W

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R 061339Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 495

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AF/E FOR BARRETT

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OAU, OGEN, AF/E

SUBJECT: MESSAGE FOR DR. DON JOHANSON

REF: ADDIS ABABA 9097

1. BACKGROUND: RICHARD WILDING IS LOCAL ADMIN AID FOR THE JOINT US-FRENCH AND ETHIOPIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPEDITION IN THE HADAR REGION OF THE LOWER AWASH WHICH IS PLANNING TO RESUME WORK IN THE LOWER AWASH THIS FALL. WILDING HAS RUN INTO MANY PROBLEMS WHICH NEED ATTENTION BEFORE THE MEMBERS OF THE EXPEDITION BEGIN ARRIVING, POSSIBLY EARLY NEXT MONTH.

2. WILDING HAS WRITTEN TOM GRAY AT CASE WESTERN RESERVE, ASSISTANT TO THE AMERICAN LEADER OF THE EXPEDITION, DR. DON JOHANSON, CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY. WILDING HAS SENT JOHANSON FOUR CABLES WITHOUT RESPONSE.

3. THE DETAILS: WILDING IS WORRIED ABOUT THE SECURITY SITUATION. FOR EXAMPLE, ISSAS HAVE BEEN SEEN ON THE LANDING STRIP WHERE THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG HAS RECEIVED THE BULK OF ITS SUPPLIES (THIS IS AN AFAR AREA AND, IN THE PAST, ISSAS WERE UNKNOWN IN IT).

4. THERE HAS BEEN AFAR-ISSA FIGHTING ALONG BOTH THE BATI-MILLE AND GAWANI-MILLE ROADS (SEE REFTTEL). LAST

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YEAR MUCH LOGISTICAL SUPPORT WAS PROVIDED BY CHARTERED

AIRCRAFT FROM AXUM AIR. AXUM AIR HAS VERY FEW AIRCRAFT LEFT AND IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT ANYTHING LIKE REGULAR AND RELIABLE CHARTER SERVICE CAN BE PROVIDED. AS A RESULT ALMOST EVERYTHING FOR THE DIG MUST BE SHIPPED IN BY ROAD AND THE ROAD IS POTENTIALLY UNSAFE.

5. IN ADDITION TO THE SECURITY AND SUPPLY PROBLEMS, WILDING REPORTS THAT THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT IS HIGHLY IRRITATED THAT SEVERAL ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS HAVE NOT BEEN CLEARED UP FROM LAST YEAR'S EXPEDITION. FOR EXAMPLE, THEY CLAIM THAT A ETH.\$30,000 TAX CLEARANCE PAPER FOR A BOAT AND CAMERAS HAS NOT BEEN TAKEN CARE OF. EXPEDITION LEADERS HAD PROMISED THE EPMG THAT THESE ITEMS WOULD BE REEXPORTED. WILDING STATES THE BOAT IS AT THE FRENCH EMBASSY AND ASSUMES THAT THE CAMERAS MAY HAVE BELONGED TO PRESS MEN VISITING THE DIG. IT IS IMPERATIVE TO LOCATE THE IMPORT DOCUMENTS AND SATISFY THE ETHIOPIAN REQUEST THAT THE ITEMS IMPORTED BE REEXPORTED. THOSE POSSESSING THE DOCUMENTS SHOULD GO TO THE NEAREST ETHIOPIAN EMBASSY AND EXHIBIT THEM WITH THE REEXPORTED CAMERAS.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: 1) CONTACT DON JOHANSON, PHONE: (212) 231-4600; 2) BRIEF HIM ON THE SECURITY SITUATION (WE SHARE WILDING'S CONCERN; 3) TELL HIM THAT IN OUR JUDGMENT HE SHOULD EVALUATE SECURITY SITUATION VERY CAREFULLY BEFORE ACTUALLY ARRANGING FOR PERSONNEL AND SUPPLIES TO COME TO ETHIOPIA (WE WILL BE GLAD TO UPDATE OUR OWN EVALUATION OF HIS AREA OF INTEREST AT ANY TIME IF HE WISHES); 4) ASK HIM WHETHER HE HAS DONE ANYTHING WITH EPMG ABOUT ARRANGING FOR RADIO CONTACT BETWEEN DIG AND ADDIS; 5) CALL HIS ATTENTION TO WILDING'S RECENT LETTER TO TOM GRAY, AND CONVINCE HIM TO TAKE IMMEDIATELY THE NECESSARY ACTION AND MAKE THE NECESSARY CONTACTS TO REMOVE THE TAX CLEARANCE PROBLEM, OTHERWISE THIS VERY IMPORTANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPEDITION WHICH HAS SIGNIFICANT AMERICAN SUPPORT WILL FACE EPMG OPPOSITION NOTWITHSTANDING THE SECURITY SITUATION. TIENKEN

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